

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECRE, PINS, UR

SUBJECT: CONVICT LABORERS BUILD DIMITROVGRAD FACTORY

REF: 75 MOSCOW 3358

1. RICHARD J. SCHAGER, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS FOR GOULD'S ENGINE PARTS DIVISION, TOLD COMOFF AUGUST 13 THAT CONVICTS LABORERS ARE BUILDING FACTORY IN DIMITROVGRAD (FORMERLY MELEKESS) WHICH WILL HOUSE DOLS 47 MILLION WORTH OF HALF BEARING MANUFACTURING EQUIPMENT COMPANY SOLD SOVIETS (REFTEL). WHEN SCHAGER AND GOULD TECHNICIANS ARRIVED AT SITE LAST MONTH TO BEGIN ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS, THEY FOUND PARTIALLY COMPLETED FACTORY SURROUNDED BY TWO HEAVY BARBED WIRE FENCES AND WOODEN STOCKADE. ARMED GUARDS MANNED WATCH TOWERS AT STOCKADE CORNERS. BUSSED IN AND OUT OF COMPOUND EVERY DAY FROM PRISON CAMP NEAR TOWN, CONVICT LABORERS WERE MEN IN MID-TWENTIES WITH SHAVEN HEADS AND DARK PRISON GARB.

2. CONVICTS APPEARED TO HAVE SOME JOB TRAINING AND WORKED UNDER SUPERVISION OF NON-CONVICT FOREMEN, BUT SCHAGER FELT THAT EXTREMELY SLOW PACE OF THEIR WORK WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SIZEABLE DELAYS IN COMPLETING FACTORY. IN EFFORT TO SPEED COMPLETION, NON-CONVICT CONSTRUCTION TEAM CONTINUED WORK IN EVENING AFTER PRISONERS HAD DEPARTED. GOULD TEAM'S OWN WORK WAS DELAYED UNTIL SMALL ENCLAVE, ALSO SURROUNDED BY TWO BARBED WIRE FENCES, WAS BUILT WITHIN STOCKADE FOR USE THEIR ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS.

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3. SCHAGER BELIEVED THAT USE OF CONVICT LABOR ON HIS PLANT WAS NOT ANOMALY IN DIMITROVGRAD AREA, FOR HE SPOTTED TWO OTHER CONSTRUCTION SITES SURROUNDED BY SIMILAR STOCKADES.

STOESSEL

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